1954

The San Francisco Museum of Art presents

# ART IN CINEMA

Series Eleven—Ninth Year

The second part of **Aspects of the American film: the Work of Fifteen Directors**

Through the cooperation of six prominent film directors as guest speakers, showing their own films, this series will again present some of the most positive and consequential aspects of the American film.

Although it is difficult to say who is most responsible for a complicated business such as the motion picture, the director is, without a doubt, most responsible for its final creative core.

**Six Friday evenings at 8**

October 1 **GENE KELLY**

The famed dancer is also a director, not only in collaboration with such directors as Vincente Minnelli in the musical, but of his own INVITATION TO THE DANCE, which has not yet been commercially released. Mr. Kelly will show sections from **INVITATION TO THE DANCE,** and his directorial sequences from **ON THE TOWN** and **SINGING IN THE RAIN** (MGM).

October 8 **WILLIAM WELLMAN**

Such films as his A PUBLIC ENEMY and NOTHING SACRED represent the best traditions of the American film, but his **THE OX-BOW INCIDENT** (1943, 20th Century Fox) must be considered a truly unique classic. Mr. Wellman will discuss this film in conjunction with its showing on this program.

October 15 **MERIAN C. COOPER on ROBERT FLAHERTY**

As one of the earliest and most influential of the documentary film makers, Merian C. Cooper, together with Ernest Schoedsack, was second only to Robert Flaherty. Mr. Cooper will talk about Flaherty's films as well as his own documentaries. **MAN OF ARAN** (1934, Gaumont-British) by Robert Flaherty, and sections from **GRASS** (1925, Paramount) and **CHANG** (1927, Paramount) by Cooper and Schoedsack, will be shown.

October 22 **JOSEPH MANKIEWICZ**

A producer and later a director, Mr. Mankiewicz has been responsible for such fine films as **ALL ABOUT EVE** (1950, 20th Century Fox) and **JULIUS CAESAR** (1953, MGM). Sections of these two will be shown for his talk here.

October 29 **JEAN NEGULESCO**

Mr. Negulesco, formerly a graphic artist, first directed THE MASK OF DEMETRIUS in 1934. Since then he has risen to the top, and his fine film, **JOHNNY BELINDA** (1948, Warner Bros.) is his selection for showing on this program.

November 5 **MACK SENNETT**

The tradition of the early slapstick was a tradition of "pure cinema," and out of it came much of the film's further development. Mr. Sennett's career bridges, in essence, almost the entire range of the motion picture.

*Programs arranged by Frank Stauffacher*

NOTE: The guest speakers and the films to be shown are from widely different locations. We ask your indulgence when programs must be altered due to circumstances beyond our control. ART IN CINEMA has been a copyrighted name since 1947. It is not to be confused with other showings in the Bay Area or elsewhere, save those in collaboration with the University of California Extension division.

Tickets for single programs sold *only* at the door on the evening of performances: Museum Members . . . . . $1.00 Non-members . . . . . $1.25

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# Art in Cinema

**Aspects of the American film: the Work of Fifteen Directors**

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**A series of films with eminent directors as guest speakers**

## *Gene KELLY

THE CROSS OF LORRAINE
CHRISTMAS HOLIDAY
ANCHORS AWEIGH
COVER GIRL
ZIEGFELD FOLLIES
THE PIRATE
THREE MUSKETEERS
Acted and co-directed:
ON THE TOWN
SINGING IN THE RAIN
IT'S A BIG COUNTRY
DEVIL MAKES THREE
AN AMERICAN IN PARIS

## *William WELLMAN

SO BIG
A STAR IS BORN
NOTHING SACRED
THE LIGHT THAT FAILED
THE STORY OF GI JOE
THE OX-BOW INCIDENT
YELLOW SKIES
BATTLEGROUND
ACROSS THE WIDE MISSOURI
WESTWARD THE WOMEN
THE HIGH AND THE MIGHTY

## *Merian C. COOPER

GRASS
CHANG
FOUR FEATHERS
KING KONG
LOST PATROL
Co-produced with John Ford:
THE FUGITIVE
FORT APACHE
SHE WORE A YELLOW RIBBON
WAGON MASTER
RIO GRANDE
THE QUIET MAN
General manager in charge of production:
CINERAMA CORPORATION
Co-producer:
THIS IS CINERAMA

## *Joseph MANKIEWICZ

THE LATE GEORGE APLEY
THE GHOST AND MRS. MUIR
HOUSE OF STRANGERS
LETTER TO THREE WIVES
ALL ABOUT EVE
FIVE FINGERS
JULIUS CAESAR
THE BAREFOOT COUNTESSA

## *Jean NEGULESCO

THE MASK OF DEMETRIUS
HUMORESQUE
JOHNNY BELINDA
THREE CAME HOME
THE MUDLARK
PHONE CALL FROM A STRANGER
HOW TO MARRY A MILLIONAIRE
LYDIA BAILEY
THREE COINS IN THE FOUNTAIN

## *Mack SENNETT

He discovered for motion pictures:
CHARLIE CHAPLIN
MARIE DRESSLER
WALLACE BEERY
GLORIA SWANSON
HARRY LANGDON
POLLY MORAN
CHESTER CONKLIN
HAROLD LLOYD
PHYLLIS HAVRE
MACK SWAIN
BUSTER KEATON
BEBE DANIELS
HAL ROACH
LEW CODY
LOUISE FAZENDA
EDDIE FOY
W. C. FIELDS
BING CROSBY

We wish to extend grateful acknowledgment to The Screen Directors' Guild of America for making this series possible.

*Partial list of films

THE SAN FRANCISCO MUSEUM OF ART

ART IN CINEMA SERIES ELEVEN

ASPECTS OF THE AMERICAN FILM: THE WORK OF FIFTEEN DIRECTORS

**Friday, October 1, 1954**

GENE KELLY

From COVER GIRL, the alter ego sequence (Columbia Pictures, 1944)
From SINGING IN THE RAIN, section (MGM, 1952)
From ANCHORS AWEIGH, the cartoon and Olvera sequences (MGM, 1945)
From LIVING IN A GREAT BIG WAY, the statue dance (MGM, 1947)

(Intermission: 10 minutes)

From WORDS AND MUSIC, the Slaughter on Tenth Avenue sequence (MGM, 1948)
From SUMMER STOCK, the Newspaper Dance (MGM, 1950)
From THE PIRATE, the Nina, and Be A Clown sequences (MGM, 1948)

Mr. Kelly will show these short sections from his films which present him as dancer, actor, and choreographer. His talk will follow.

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Program Notes*

This opening evening of the eleventh series is a continuation of our ASPECTS OF THE AMERICAN FILM: THE WORK OF FIFTEEN DIRECTORS theme, seven of these directors having been presented here last Spring with extraordinary success. This series, then, will again seek out the most outstanding traditions of the American film, traditions that had their birth and development in this country. Of all these traditions, the film musical is among the highest of our film culture and it is completely unchallenged by film production abroad.

The film musical comprises a special set of sensibilities and talents in its creation, and evokes a special kind of emotional experience in its audience, an emotion which is not at all similar to the emotion evoked by the stage musical. In an extremely interesting article from abroad, Douglas Newton draws a chose parallel between the visual equivalent of poetry, and the film musical - a parallel that is not as obscure as it first seems. **

"...Poetry comes in with the films in which the dances are part of the story; a kind of film of which Minnelli and Gene Kelly are the acknowledged masters: it amazes one to see how again and again they succeed in their enormous tasks of organisation with the air of children pulling the prize out of the lucky dip. Indeed Kelly, so like a handsome, virile penguin with a sense of humour, is one of the small number of Hollywood's actors who have poetic presences.

"One poetic actor doesn't make a poetic film, however; nor does a poetic scene. For the pervading attraction of musicals we have to look further. The fact is that the musical has deep roots in myth and sentiment, in all that the average man feels as poetic. These films are the modern equivalent of pastoral poetry, which fulfils an important need but is no longer provided by poets. They present a nostalgic world which may be witty but is all the same essentially innocent and uncorrupt, and is inhabited by beings who are always charming and beautiful. Occasionally interrupted by harpies or dirty old men, their loves are always successful in the long run. The main difference between the old and the new pastorals is that now Arcadia is wherever the music plays, and that rustic poverty has no part in them - they have performed an extraordinary feat for our time; they have taken the curse off financial success.

"But the musical goes deeper still in childhood desires, for it is nearly always possible to detect in its plot parallels to the typical situation of folklore and nursery stories...It would be a mistake to dismiss the impulse behind this with an easy comment about wishfulfilment; these films are in the most classic line of entertainment that exists...The taste and ease of these musicals turns what could be merely glamour into something journalists have been writing about for years: the poetry of elegance. Passages in some of them have something of the spirit of

(over)

Proust when he describes the Duchesse of Guermantes at the opera. The difference is that Proust's image is essentially static, while the American's is in rapid, even violent, motion.

"Thus the musical film performs the important function of creating a modern myth. It draws on situations and characters which are deeply connected with poetry, and puts them in familiar if transformed settings. Using the sort of material it does, it always has overtones of poetry, concentrating at times to points of intensity which have behind them all the weight of vitality, music, elegance and personal beauty. The particular associations this poetry draws on bring us back, too, to the appeal of the particular image or moment, where the kind of experience suddenly heightened, transformed into poetry, is something to which we quickly respond.

"Other kinds of film poetry certainly exist; the musical is something quite different. The way it unconsciously (in part, at least) falls into a great tradition, gives it an authenticity which means that it is the least pretentious and most genuine poetic film which has yet been produced. That musicals are superficially designed only as entertainment should blind nobody to the kind of entertainment they really are, and the heights they really reach."

GENE KELLY was born in Pittsburgh, Pa, one of five children. His father was an executive of the Columbia Gramaphone Company, and his mother had been an actress in her early days, and during their grammer school days she sent Gene and one of her other sons to a dancing school. But in High School, and later on, at Penn State College, where he majored in journalism, dancing was carried on only as a hobby. He worked his way through college, and during his senior year, he did some acting and directing for the Cap and Gown society. This further led to setting up a small dancing school in cooperation with his mother - known as the Gene Kelly Studios - which grew to considerable success.

His first theatrical job was in the chorus of Broadway's LEAVE IT TO ME with Mary Martin, and next, in the revue ONE FOR THE MONEY. After this he went into summer stock at Westport, Conn., and here he met the author and playwright, William Saroyan. Their friendship eventually resulted in getting Mr. Kelly his first big break, one of the chief roles in Saroyan's TIME OF YOUR LIFE on Broadway. Billy Rose was the next contact. He signed Kelly to stage the dances for his fabulous Diamond Horseshoe nightclub. And soon after, the producer, George Abbot, had him take the only male lead in his musical, PAL JOEY. As a result, Hollywood beckoned in 1942, and his first part there was with Judy Garland in FOR ME AND MY GAL. In 1943, among many other projects, he played a straight dramatic part in PILOT FIVE; followed by DUBARRY WAS A LADY and THOUSANDS CHEER, as well as THE CROSS OF LORRAINE, which again was a straight dramatic role. During the war, he enlisted in the Navy, soon becoming a lieutenant. After the war, he returned to Hollywood to take part in a long list of highly successful musical films. His latest films are AN AMERICAN IN PARIS and the forthcoming BRIGADOON. Recently Mr. Kelly returned from Europe, where he had been directing his own choreographic interpretation of the dance on film, the INVITATION TO THE DANCE.

We wish indeed to thank Mr. Kelly for his exceptional cooperation with this opening presentation of our series. He comes from Hollywood in the midst of a new production, and that in itself is exceptional. We wish also to thank MGM for their kindness in making up these film sections for Mr. Kelly's use here.

* Several sections of these quoted paragraphs on the program note have been used last series for Vincente Minnelli's appearance here.

**POETRY IN FAST AND MUSICAL MOTION by Douglas Newton, in Sight and Sound, (London, July-September, 1952.)

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Next Friday, October 8, WILLIAM WELLMAN will be here to show and discuss his film THE OX-BOW INCIDENT.

THE SAN FRANCISCO MUSEUM OF ART

ART IN CINEMA SERIES ELEVEN

ASPECTS OF THE AMERICAN FILM: THE WORK OF FIFTEEN DIRECTORS

Friday, October 8, 1954

WILLIAM WELLMAN

THE OX-BOW INCIDENT.....William Wellman

(Intermission: 10 minutes)

WILLIAM WELLMAN, guest speaker

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Program Notes

The Ox-Bow Incident (Twentieth Century-Fox, 1943). Directed by William Wellman. Adaption of a short novel by Walter Van Tilburg Clark; produced and written for the screen by Lamar Trotti. Camera, Arthur Miller. With Henry Fonda, Dana Andrews, Henry Morgan, Marc Laurence, Harry Davenport, Victor Kilian, Anthony Quinn, Mary Beth Hughes, James Darwell, and others.

This film, although hardly older than the past decade, is now one of our country's timeless classics in the film. As a form, it is one of the few which we might call a dramatic tragedy (or a tragic-sketch). And there is a poetry about it found to a large degree in the great tragedies, from Aeschylus' AGAMEMNON, to the modern classics.

This frightening study of mob violence and mass brutality is, at the same time, a damning indictment of lynching, and beyond that, of the base crime against the twenty-eight people who call themselves innocent in the name of justice. It demonstrates how fallible man is, and how in times of his own ferocity of spirit for "justice" he may lose his reason and revert to a primitive state.

The scene is Nevada, in 1885. A local cattleman is reported murdered by rustlers, and three strangers, just leaving the town of Bridger's Wells, are suspected. Through the red dust and heat of the community sweeps a wave of resentment. The three strangers are caught. The law is slow and the people are impatient. As the fever grows, the cruelty which is the product of frustration begins to flower. Reason has given way to emotion. The three strangers are lynched.

The frightening aspect of the situation is that these people are all perfectly normal, and, for the most part, good. It is only that under special conditions they lose touch with reason and commit the most heinous crime, a crime against their own conscience. When it is over, they are devastated by what they have done,

"The Ox-Bow Incident was a decided change from the Hollywood tradition, since producer, director, and actors seemed to be unhampered by the box-office...It was an example of perfection in film technique."*

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WILLIAM WELLMAN was born in Brookline, Mass., of New England Irish-English parentage. He entered the first World War before America was in it, as a member of the Norton-Hayes Ambulance Corp for service in France. From there he entered the Foreign Legion of the French Army in 1917. In 1918, when the United States came into the war, Wellman joined the Lafayette Escadrille as a pursuit pilot, until he was shot down and sent home with a broken back. For his service he received the Croix de Guerre with four palm leaves, and five U.S. citations.

OVER

*From a New Republic review. Many of the other sections of the program notes are taken from a review by Dwight Newton in the San Francisco CHRONICLE.

"After writing his war experiences he went into the wool business in Boston, decided not to gather any and started in pictures as a juvenile in 1919 with Douglas Fairbanks in KNICKERBOCKER BUCHAROO.

He preferrred the view from the director's side of the camera so made his way to Hollywood."*

There he started with the Goldwyn Studio as a messenger boy, but soon attained the rank of assistant director. In 1923 he moved to the Fox studios as a full director, making his first film, THE MAN WHO WON. In 1926 he was engaged by Paramount-Lasky Corporation and there he made his outstanding and famous WINGS. This narrative of pilots in the first World War was a landmark in motion picture history. He remained there until 1929, when he moved to Warner Bros.-First National. Three years later he went to Twentieth-Century-Fox. Thereafter, he signed contracts with leading studios - Metro-Goldwyn Mayer, Selznick, and United Artists.

"Bill directs a picture like a general trying to break out of a beachhead. He has the reputation of being the fastest shooter in the business and prints more 'first takes' than anyone in town. He knows what he wants. As hard as nails, he has no patience with softies. 'Actors often hate him because he's rough on them,' a friend told me, 'but when they see the finished product, the hate turns to love.'

"His radical casting methods frighten the most progressive producers. He often uses the opinions of his seven children to help him decide on an actor. He'd just as soon cast an unknown in the main part as the biggest star in town. An outstanding performance in THE HIGH AND THE MIGHTY was given by Joy Kim - a Chinese college student who'd never before faced a comara. Several 'name' actresses tried to get the part but Wellman turned them down."*

Among the other 79 films of this famous director's work are PUBLIC ENEMY (1931), NOTHING SACRED (1937), and A STAR IS BORN (1937), all three concerned with extremely varying subjects. (A STAR IS BORN was, by the way, co-authored by Wellman and many of his other films drew strength from careful writing). His THE STORY OF G. I. JOE (1945) evoked Richard Griffith, in his book "The Film Till Now", to say: "THE STORY OF G. I. JOE is one of the most authentic pieces of the cinema".*

Next Friday, October 15, we will present MERIAN C. COOPER, the famous documentary film maker, and more recently one of the founders of CINERAMA and co-producer of THIS IS CINERAMA, in a discussion of the father of the Documentary, ROBERT FLAHERTY. MAN OF ARAN will be shown, plus Mr. Cooper's films CHANG and GRASS.

* From an article by Hedda Hopper on William Wellman, 10-3-54.

THE SAN FRANCISCO MUSEUM OF ART

ART IN CINEMA SERIES ELEVEN

ASPECTS OF THE AMERICAN FILM: THE WORK OF FIFTEEN DIRECTORS

Friday, October 15, 1954

MERIAN C. COOPER, guest speaker

MAN OF ARAN.....ROBERT FLAHERTY
(Intermission: 10 minutes)
GRASS (Section)..COOPER and SCHOEDSACK
CHANG (Section).. " " "

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Program Notes

The documenatry, as a distinct and separate form of the motion picture, originated in this country, not in Europe. It was Robert Flaherty who made the first epic NANOOK OF THE NORTH in 1922 as a method of film-making which takes its themes, its actors, and its settings from life itself.

The term Documentary, however, was adapted by the famed Britisher, John Grierson, from the French word documentaire, which means the description of travel pictures popular in the French cinema. It seemed to Grierson, writing in the late twenties, a good word to use for Flaherty's films.

"The importance of Flaherty to documentary proper is that he was the first film-maker to carry out Grierson's precept, 'The creative treatment of actuality.' The difference between a newsreel and NANOOK is that the newsreel is a record of reality, whereas NANOOK is an interpretation. Flaherty lived with his subjects before he photographed them. He worked with them, studying their ways of life and thought. He watched the struggle with Nature, the fulfillment of tradition, the skill of the craftsman, the rhythm of simple age-long movements. Then he shot what he had seen unrolling vast quantities of negative in the process, like Eisenstein in Mexico. Then he cut and built his film, using only a fraction of what he had shot so that his observation and its interpretation would be of the best. He was a craftsman studing craftsmen: a romantic recording the great theme of mankind and Nature."*

Apart from that, there were very few factual films at the time, except the work of Merian C. Cooper and Ernest Schoedsack, with their classic GRASS in 1925, and two years later, the famous CHANG.

We are indeed exceptionally honored to have Mr. Cooper with us tonight. Although the documentary form is now an advanced and integrated use of the motion picture, its beginnings were shared by only Flaherty, Schoedsack, and Mr. Cooper. Further, Mr. Cooper, having made GRASS and CHANG some thirty years ago, is now the co-producer of the newest innovation of our time in the cinema - CINERAMA. It is interesting to note that Flaherty, just before he died four years ago, was planning negotiations with CINERAMA.

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MAN OF ARAN (Gaumont-British, 1934). Directed and photographed by Robert Flaherty. Flaherty left America after he finished his third film, TABU, under contract to Paramount (which was a result of his earlier MOANA). Aboard the liner to Europe, he fell into conversation with a young Irishman from Cork, who told him about the barren Islands of Aran, the fantastic primitive world there, the bravery of the people, and the sea - the most horrible in the world.

"Soon after, I was in England, I hadn't been able to get the Aran Islands out of my mind, and when I met Mr. Michael Balcon, the brilliant producer for the Gaumont-British Company, I found myself, almost unconsciously, telling him about Aran, that I was sure a fine film could be made there - a film whose theme would be the struggle of man against the sea. To my delight Mr. Balcon's response was enthusiastic and instantaneous. Within a fortnight my wife and I made a survey of the islands, which lie off the west coast of Ireland, thirty miles out from the old city of Galway.

"Our crew at this time, besides my wife and myself, consisted of a young English lad, John Taylor, who could, and what is more had to, do everything. Later on our unit was joined by my brother David with his Akeley camera.

"There are no motor cars on Aran, no movie theatres, no luxuries of any kind. The young man from Cork had not exaggerated the barrenness of the island. To the islanders their hard-won soil is more precious than gold. They would not part with a foot of their land, barren as it is, for any consideration.

(over)

"Nor had my friend of the boat exaggerated the sea. All the way from America the North Atlantic sweeps in and hurls itself against the high rugged coast, sometimes climbing three hundred feet to the cliff tops and then sweeping in over the land.

"Drowning here was no more than a natural death. Like most fishermen, the Aran Islanders do not swim. 'The Spirit of the sea is a monster, and must not be denied,' they say."**

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GRASS (Paramount, 1925) and CHANG (Paramount, 1927). "Merian C. Cooper and Ernest B. Schoedsack first achieved recognition by their film GRASS, which was made among the Baktyari tribe of North West Persia, during 1925. The picture was a vivid record of the almost insurmountable difficulties that faced the tribe when they migrated twice yearly in their trek for grass. One watched with suspense the extraordinary manner in which this band of half a million men, women, and children surmounted the snow-dovered mountain range, and forded the roaring torrent that barred their way. The film was a marvellous photographic record. After the success of GRASS the same pair went to the jungle country of Northern Siam, where they spent two years in taking records with the camera. Eventually CHANG was capably mounted into a story form, and credit was due to the editors who worked up the theme to a highly emotional climax, which, as has been mentioned at a later stage, was rendered even more dramatic by the use of the magnascope. CHANG told the story of the family of Kru, a Lao tribesman, who built beyond the village in a clearing in the jungle, and of his struggle not only against the encroaching jungle but the beasts that lived there. Not one sequence of this admirable film dragged. Moreover, the spirit of the jungle was captured in such a manner that the audience seemed to live in it themselves. When the jungle awoke at the close of Kru's hardworking day, a wonderful feeling of stirring, of undergrowth moved by unseen forms, of branches swinging by other forces than those of the wind, spread into the spectators. Thus the film continued, until suddenly, as if by magic, the magnascope flooded the whole of one end of the cinema with the massed stampede of elephants. The emotional power of this climax was so strong, so overwhelming in its size and movement, that I have little hesitation in calling it one of the most brilliant ever devised."***

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MERIAN C. COOPER was born in Jacksonville, Florida in 1893. He went to school there and at the Naval Academy in New Jersey. After working as a newspaper writer for the NY Times and The National Geographic, he went during World War I to France as a pilot. After the war, he organized the Kusciusko squadron, a fighter bomber unit to attack the Bolshevik brutalities against the Poles, was shot down, and escaped death by walking to Latvia. Later he met Ernest Schoedsack, one of the best European news cameramen, and together they planned their journey to Persia which resulted in GRASS and CHANG. In the early 30's he became Vice-President in Charge of Production at RKO in Hollywood. Among the films that resulted were FOUR FEATHERS, KING KONG (which, during the depth of the depression period, saved the financial status of the studio, and became a classic of its kind), and FLYING DOWN TO RIO, forming the fame of the Astaire-Rogers team. He also was instrumental in backing Technicolor technique at its start. - During World War II, he volunteered as captain in the Air Force and became Chief of Staff to General Chennault. - He is now co-owner, with director John Ford, of Argosy Films, where he produced, among others, FORT APACHE, SHE WORE A YELLOW RIBBON, and THE QUIET MAN.

Mr. Cooper is the co-producer and co-director of THIS IS CINERAMA. Last year he won an Academy Award "for his many innovations and contributions to the art of the motion picture".

* Film by Roger Manvell. (Pages 94,95).
** The World of Robert Flaherty by Richard Griffith. A quote from Flaherty.(Pages 83,84).
*** The Film Till Now by Paul Rotha and Richard Griffith. (Page 206).

THE SAN FRANCISCO MUSEUM OF ART

ART IN CINEMA SERIES ELEVEN

ASPECTS OF THE AMERICAN FILM: THE WORK OF FIFTEEN DIRECTORS

Friday, October 22, 1954

FRANK CAPRA

YOU CAN'T TAKE IT WITH YOU.....FRANK CAPRA

(Intermission: 10 minutes)

FRANK CAPRA, guest speaker

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Notes on the speaker

Frank Capra, born in Palermo, Sicily, on May 18, 1897, was named for his grandfather, a designer and builder of churches. When the boy, the youngest of seven children, was six years old, his family left Sicily to go to the United States, settling on the West Coast in Los Angeles. He worked selling newspapers when he was at school and from the California Institute of Technology he won a scholarship which entitled him to travel as part of his studies. After teaching mathematics at Fort Scott in San Francisco during World War I, he introduced himself to Walter Montague, an actor, who was planning to produce films in San Francisco. His qualification to direct films, Capra told Montague, was that he came from Los Angeles. As a result Capra was employed to make dramatizations of poem classics. As director, Capra secured the services of a cameraman friend, and refused to hire professional actors, who might be aware of his lack of experience, telling his employer that such a procedure was "old-fashioned." He was paid seventy-five dollars for his work on Kipling's FULTAH FISHER'S BOARDINGHOUSE, spent $1,700 for the production, which was sold to Pathe for twice that amount. Johnston wrote of it: "Critics noted that it was free from stunts, mannerisms, camera angles, and Hollywood tricks. It had to be free from them as Capra had never had time to learn anything of them." November 1922 found Capra still in San Francisco, working for the Paul Gerson studios. Before he went to Hollywood, Capra was to be a property man, a film cutter, an assistant director, and writer of film titles.

In Hollywood, Capra found a place, with Mack Sennett, writing for Hal Roach comedies. He then became a writer for Harry Langdon, whose success some writers attribute to Capra. In 1930 Capra, then under a long-term contract with Columbia, cast Barbara Stanwyck, who had been a success on Broadway but undistinguished in films, in LADIES OF LEISURE. With Miss Stanwyck, he made FORBIDDEN, which has since been novelized from Capra's scenario, and THE MIRACLE WOMAN, which brought the director into his first contact with writer Robert Riskin, with whom he has often been associated. His PLATINUM BLOND (1931) made Jean Harlow a star and started the cycle of "blond allure" in Hollywood.

It was IT HAPPENED ONE NIGHT (1934) which won for Capra the first of a number of prizes. For this film he received the Academy Award for directing. Capra wrote a comic musical number for BROADWAY BILL, which he produced in 1934. MR. DEEDS GOES TO TOWN (1936) gave Capra another Academy Award, then LOST HORIZON (1937). For YOU CAN'T TAKE IT WITH YOU, Capra was awarded another honor by the academy.

After directing the screen version of ARSENIC AND OLD LACE (which won Belgium's highest film award), 1941 Capra joined the 834th Signal Photographic Detachment of the United States Army. During World War II he was in charge of a Special Service branch of the War Department, served as assistant chief and chief of production of the Army Pictorial Service, then rose to the rank of colonel, and, by the time of his

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discharge in June 1945, had been awarded the Distinguished Service Medal and the Legion of Merit. These honors were for his work on the WHY WE FIGHT, KNOW YOUR ENEMIES, KNOW YOUR ALLIES series produced originally for exclusive showings to members of the United States armed forces, but later narrated in "practically all languages".

Capra believes (as expressed in his articles and interviews): "We have barely scratched the surface of the film's possibilities. The vast, complicated machinery of Hollywood is too often used to create entertainment for adolescents. We have perfected our assembly line methods - but not the creative processes."

Capra has been president of the Directors' Guild and of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences. *

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## Notes on the film

YOU CAN'T TAKE IT WITH YOU (Columbia, 1938) from the play by George Kaufman and Moss Hart, screen play by Robert Riskin. Directed by Frank Capra. With James Stewart, Jean Arthur, Lionel Barrymore, Edward Arnold, Misha Auer, Spring Byington, Donald Meek, and others. (This print courtesy of Columbia Pictures.)

The stage play by George Kaufman and Moss Hart won a Pulitzer Prize, the adaption by Frank Capra and Robert Riskin made a film which won an Academy Award, and in both forms it won the nation's affection. Looking through local press files, John Hobart's review when the film was released in 1938 is acutely interesting, and we use it here.

"...That was the way George Kaufman and Moss Hart wrote it - a gay charade about a daffy and completely lovable tribe. YOU CAN'T TAKE IT WITH YOU is now a movie. Frank Capra, Columbia's best director, made it, from a screen play by Robert Riskin and with a cast that represents the cream of Hollywood. It is a work of art in its own right and in its own medium.

"You would never have expected YOU CAN'T TAKE IT WITH YOU to be transformed into an epic, but Capra and Riskin have done just that. They have turned a magnifying glass on the story, enlarged its point of view and given it new scope and significance.

"Anthony Kirby, Sr. was a minor character in the play; he is almost the central figure of the picture. A munitions maker, enormously wealthy, he is the natural enemy of the Sycamores, not only because they are unconventional and his son wants to marry Alice Sycamore, but because the family refuses to relinquish property that he needs for a factory.

"After that tragi-comic dinner party and the subsequent uncomfortable evening in jail, YOU CAN'T TAKE IT WITH YOU becomes the conflict between two antithetical philosophies - the Kirby philosophy of make more money and to hell with the rest of the world and Grandpa Vanderhof's philosophy of relax and make friends. Grandpa wins out, in the end, and Mr. Kirby, after much travail of the soul, abandons his quest for gold and is content to play his harmonica in the Sycamore parlor." **

* from CURRENT BIOGRAPHY.
** from the San Francisco Chronicle.

THE SAN FRANCISCO MUSEUM OF ART

ART IN CINEMA SERIES ELEVEN

ASPECTS OF THE AMERICAN FILM: THE WORK OF FIFTEEN DIRECTORS

Friday, October 29, 1954

(Note: Mr. Joseph Mankiewicz and Mr. Jean Negulesco, at the last moment, unfortunately have not been able to appear on this present series. Each man very much regrets not being able to be here, as they wished to participate in this kind of film presentation which, for the director, has never before been realized anywhere.

As Mr. Mankiewicz's word that he couldn't make the trip came only yesterday, we are certainly grateful that the Screen Directors' Guild has been able to get the talented director, Herbert Kline, to appear here tonight.)

THE FORGOTTEN VILLAGE (Sections)..Herbert Kline
THE FIGHTER (Sections..... " "

(Intermission: 10 minutes)

HERBERT KLINE, guest speaker

Program Notes

THE FORGOTTEN VILLAGE (1941) Produced and directed by Herbert Kline, in association with John Steinbeck. Camera; Alexander Hammid. Music; Hans Eisler. Commentary; Burgess Meredith.

Steinbeck says: "The work method was very simple, and yet required great patience. A very elastic story was written. Then the crew moved into the village, made friends, talked and listened. The story was simple: too many children die - why is that and what is done about it, both by the villagers and by the government? The story actually was a question. What we found was dramatic - the clash of a medicine and magic that was old when the Aztecs invaded the plateau with a modern medicine that is as young as a living man. To tell this story we had only to have people re-enact what had happened to them. Our 'curandera' was a real 'wise woman,' one who had practised herbology and magic in the village; our teacher was a real teacher in the government school; our doctors real doctors; our mother a real mother who had lost a number of children. If they moved through scenes with sureness and authority it was because they had been through them many times before when no cameras were there. Such a method required, above all else, patience, tact and genuine liking for the people.... Such were the methods employed in making THE FORGOTTEN VILLAGE. A curious and true and dramatic film has been the result."

And Roger Manvell, the British film critic:"The memory of this film is rich. The visual story is enhanced by the quiet unobtrusive narrative (not commentary) spoken by Burgess Meredith, and by Hans Eisler's fine music. The photography is bright with the harsh sunlight and the contrasting shadows of black foregrounds of cacti and village walls. In the narrow home with its gaunt and bleeding crucifix the mother works and waits in her pregnancy. The men and older children work in the hot fields. When the small children grow sick from the infected well Juan, shy but purposeful, picks his way to Mexico City to appeal to a doctor to come to the village. The film is full of beautiful and expressive close-ups: the mother who smiles with her shawled head tilted, the friendly simplicity of the father, joyful at the birth of more children, as he wipes the sweat and the flies from his face. When his son dies an unforgettable shot turns from the villagers dancing before the funeral to the still face of the mother, resigned in fatalistic sadness. In the final moments of the delivery of her child the mother is suspended in the attitude of crucifixion with her husband supporting her heaving body and whispering encouragement in her ear. Behind them hangs the gaunt crucifix, its symbolic presence in curious contrast to that of the Wise Woman preforming her rites of primitive midwifery."

THE FIGHTER (United Artists, 1952). Produced by Alex Gottlieb. Directed by Herbert Kline; co-authored by Mr. Kline and Aben Kandel, based upon a story by Jack London; camera by James Wong Howe. With Richard Conte, Vanesse Brown, and Lee J. Cobb.

This is about a Mexican indian who uses his prowess in the boxing ring to buy guns in the rebel cause. The period is about 1910. "...it turns up much more effective and much less pretentious entertainment than Twentieth-Century-Fox's VIVA ZAPATA", said one press film reviewer.

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Notes on the speaker.

HERBERT KLINE was born in Chicago, Illinois in 1909. Among his well known documentary films are LIGHTS OUT IN EUROPE (produced and directed), RETURN TO LIFE (produced and directed), THE FORGOTTEN VILLAGE (in collaboration with John Steinbeck). He was the associate producer of HEART OF SPAIN and HERE IS YOUR WAR, as well as YOUTH RUNS WILD and THE KID FROM CLEVELAND. In 1947, he directed MY FATHER'S HOUSE, and in 1949, A BOY, A GIRL, AND A DOG. In 1952, he directed THE FIGHTER.

In 1947, his THE FORGOTTEN VILLAGE was selected as one of the ten best films of the year. He also won the first award in the Belgium World Film Festival.

We want to thank Mr. Kline for his kind cooperation in being with us here tonight.

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Next Friday, November 5 will be the last night of this present series of "Aspects of the American Film: The Work of Fifteen Directors". This evening will present MACK SENNETT, one the the greatest figures in the American film.

THE SAN FRANCISCO MUSEUM OF ART

ART IN CINEMA SERIES ELEVEN

ASPECTS OF THE AMERICAN FILM: THE WORK OF FIFTEEN DIRECTORS

Friday, November 4, 1954

JOSEPH VON STERNBERG

THE DEVIL IS A WOMAN.....Joseph von Sternberg

(Intermission: 10 minutes)

Joseph von Sternberg, guest speaker

(MACK SENNETT, who was to be the guest speaker on this program was unable to come at the last moment, but the substitution of Mr. von Sternberg is an extraordinary find. His name is among those of the truly great creators of the American film.)

Program Notes

One of the screen's pioneer directors and one of the staunchest champions of the artistic integrity of the director as the primary creator of a film, von Sternberg is one of the few of all the world's directors in the last half century who have impressed their work with their individuality. These few include men like D. W. Griffith, Chaplin, von Stroheim, Lubitsch, Rene Clair, Capra, Ford, etc.

Von Sternberg was born in Vienna and in 1901 was brought to New York as a child. In 1924, for $4,800 he produced, independently, his own film, THE SALVATION HUNTERS, which was brought by United Artists immediately, and a new director was discovered.

Shortly afterwards, he made the first gangster film, UNDERWORLD, which was such a success that it started a whole cycle, which was to last many years.

His first sound film was THUNDERBOLT, followed by BLUE ANGEL, made in Germany, in which he introduced to the world Marlene Dietrich. Upon returning to Hollywood, he starred her in a series of films - MOROCCO, DISHONORED, SHANGHAI EXPRESS, THE BLOND VENUS, THE SCARLET EMPRESS, and THE DEVIL IS A WOMAN.

During this period he also films Dreiser's AN AMERICAN TRAGEDY and Dostoievski's CRIME AND PUNISHMENT.

Mr. Von Sternberg's most recent film, ANA-TA-HAN, was filmed in Japan with an all-Japanese cast and crew.

"Von Sternberg made his first sound film, THE BLUE ANGEL (1930), in Germany under Pommer's supervision. Based on a novel by Henrich Mann, the picture was a psychological study of a sex-starved professor, a sort of characterization for which the star, Emil Jannings, had already become known. Opposite Jannings was an obscure music hall singer, Marlene Dietrich, subsequently to become, as Dwight Mac Donald put it, Sternberg's femme fatale. This technically superb picture had all the qualities of Sternberg: luminous chiasoscuro of a deep, low tone, remarkable camera angles and composition, elaborate background details, a smooth and easy blending of sequences through dissolves, and music and song which moved with the images. Such features gave the film a sensuous elegance."("The Rise of the American Film", Lewis Jacobs.)

"Max Reinhardt, upon seeing von Sternberg's first film, THE SALVATION HUNTERS, remarked:'It is inconceivable that such cinematic greatness could have been achieved in America.' Chaplin, Douglas Fairbanks, Sr. and Joseph Schenck were similarly enthusiastic, buying it for United Artists release, and a new director was launched. Soon, von Sternberg made THE SEA GULL(not the Chekov play) for Chaplin which, though described by John Grierson as containing some of the most beautifully poetic photography he had ever seen, was not released by Chaplin for reasons of his own. From the fragile imagery of THE SEA GULL to the toughness of UNDERWORLD, which set the pattern for all the American gangster films to come, was an incredibly facile step for the versatile young artist. UNDERWORLD was an artistic and financial success, and Paramount gave von Sternberg a $10,000 bonus. By this time, he was

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riding the crest of the wave. Emil Jannings' first American film, THE LAST COMMAND, was so well received that Jannings, after his return to Berlin with the advent of the sound film, asked Erich Pommer, then production head of UFA, to bring its director, von Sternberg, to guide Jannings through his first sound film, THE BLUE ANGEL. This was the film which turned out to have, as Jannings's vis-a-vis, a hitherto little-known actress named Marlene Dietrich. The rest is history." ("Theatre Arts", August 1953, Herman Weinberg).

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THE DEVIL IS A WOMAN (Paramount, 1935). Scenario: John Dos Passos. Photography: Sternberg and Lucien Ballard. Art Director: Hans Dreier. Music: Ralph Rainger. Director: Joseph von Sternberg. With Marlene Dietrich, Lionel Atwill, Allison Skipworth, Edward Everett Horton, Caesar Romero, and others.

"Both directed and photographed by von Sternberg, this film is certainly the most beautiful thing he has given us. Indeed so magnificent are the portraits, especially of Lionel Atwill, that the story is almost forgotten at a first viewing in admiration of their technical and artistic perfection. The quality of the photography is superb. It has a depth of colour all too rarely seen. Miss Dietrich's beauty and allure is so vividly presented in these glorious photographs; her acting so justly attuned to the worthless baggage she represents, the whole picture so cunningly directed, that we felt convinced that with the characters the story portrayed, no other course of action would be possible, no other ending tolerable." ("The American Film", Eric Rideout.)

"The femme-fatale theme found in all the Marlene-Sternberg productions reaches a climax in the latest, and most brilliant film: THE DEVIL IS A WOMAN, taken from the well-known novel of Pierre Louys. Marlene in the person of Concha Perez is that proud, passionate, sadistic type of woman who tortures her lover beyond all imaginable cruelty. Marlene, in Sternberg's other films, had already played the part of the femme fatale, for which Mario Praz gives us this definition: ' A femme-fatale, sophisticated, unreal - starting with Flaubert, Gauthier, later with Swinburne, and now with Walter Pater, Wilde, d'Annunzio...' The part in THE DEVIL IS A WOMAN comes straight from literature. Sternberg's 'exoticism' goes hand in hand with the femme-fatale theme: one would seem false without the other. Mario Praz' definition of exoticism can also be applied to Sternberg's films: 'exoticism is by nature a sort of artistic and sensual outward manifestation...the "exotic" invents feelings of the past, far away countries and makes them materialize...it is an ideal world, a world of dreams...'

"And this world of dreams was never better incarnated than in the coherent evocation of an end-of-the-century Spanish fantasy such as found in THE DEVIL IS A WOMAN. The final sequence of the film, which is Sternberg's invention, in which the denpuncement remains problematic until the last minute, is one of the most subtle, and ironically ambiguous ever seen on the screen. It was very carefully calculated to have a special meaning for those who had really understood the story, and another meaning for those who had not understood it. Sternberg, apparently expected the big American public to adopt the second meaning." ("Cahiers de Cinema", October-November 1951, Curtis Harrington.)